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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Be certain that he who has betrayed this once will betray thee again.—Lavater.

WHOLE NO. 977. WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1929. FRANK MORRISON, Secretary VOL. 19, NO. 42.

DISTINCT POLITICO-ECONOMIC TRENDS IN 1929

The year 1929 was marked by political and economic trends that have a direct relation to government polity and the lives of each individual.

Without attempting a rigid classification of the importance and effect of these trends, the one of major concern and of most far-reaching consequence is unemployment and the displacement of 40 and 45-year-old workers.

Mergers and combines are increasing. These are eliminating dealers and employes of every class.

The old system of interlocking directorates has been replaced by irresponsible holding companies that take over a group of plants and issue holding company stock as payment. Such stock is controlled by bankers and financiers. As the holding company does not operate the plants it is above the law.

Another significant corporation tendency is the calling in of bonds and substituting common stock, whose dividends are subject to the judgment of boards of directors. A bond holder has a lien on the property, but holding stock is speculation.

Centralization of government has been promoted. The judiciary is quietly assuming greater power and the office of President is undergoing the same change through appointment of an increasing number of commissions that extend their authority as they become entrenched.

The slogan "private initiative" is used as a screen for government aid. Business men no longer fear anti-trust laws. They sit in with Department of Justice officials and arrange consent decrees that will permit monopolization. Former crude methods are abandoned. The Federal Trade Commission suggests how "gentlemen's agreements" can be made effective without litigation. The public is assured this process is "stabilization."

The Farm Relief Act, which authorizes loans of $500,000,000 for purposes of marketing, is a revolutionary venture in legislation. Its success depends on the manner in which it is handled. It may drive the middlemen out of the grain business and it may result in enthroning bank-controlled co-operatives of farmers that are autocratically operated, rather than on democratic lines.

Old-age sentiment is being crystalized. Even officials of life insurance companies are agreeing that "something must be done" for the aged.

Agitation for drastic child labor legislation is again developing as thinking citizens realize the effect of this evil on future generations.

The value of high wages—long urged by organized labor in opposition to the theory that low wages cheapen production—is universally accepted. It is yet considered an academic theory by many employers. Workers must fight as hard as ever to give this theory practical application.

The five-day week principle has made distinct gains. It has been accepted to such an extent that spokesmen for a score of anti-union employers' organizations recently declared the five-day week can no longer be classed as "radical."

The past year has been marked by a weakening of political party lines. This is especially notable in the United States Senate, where party lines and party discipline are flouted. Political action, along partisan lines, has less defenders among trade unionists than ever before.

Many of the above changes are in line with economic development, while others indicate that the Nation's industrialists are strengthening their lines. Centralization on the industrial field is aided by easily-controlled commissions and a life-appointed federal judiciary.

The principles of trade unionism were never better understood and while organized labor is called upon to meet an opposition that is more intelligent and disciplined, the number of realists in the workers' ranks has increased.

COURTS SEEK CZARIST POWER UNDER PLEA OF "EFFICIENCY"

Providence, R. I., Dec. 28.—Full power to make their own rules of procedure, without legislative action, is recommended to Gov. Case by the Judicial Council, composed of lawyers appointed by the chief executive and courts to "study judicial procedure."

More power to courts, it is claimed, will "simplify and expedite litigation."

Behind this catch phrase is the old struggle between the judiciary and the legislative branch of government. If courts can disregard the latter they are supreme and can make their own rules.

The extent of this wished-for power is shown in the Judicial Council's claim that equity courts have such power, and the council presents the theory that law courts should have the same right.

As equity courts are courts of conscience, and are uncontrolled by laws and rules, the objective of the Judicial Council can be understood.

This fight for judicial absolutism is being cautiously waged. The power to give this authority to the United States Supreme Court was rejected by Congress under the leadership of Senator Walsh of Montana. It was also rejected in Illinois by a popular vote when the people were called upon, several years ago, to place it in the Constitution of that State.

The late Judge Gary, steel trust magnate, was the leading industrialist who joined with lawyers who urged the schemo.

The purpose is not "efficiency," but to give greater power to the judiciary at the expense of the legislature. If the Rhode Island plan were adopted privilege and privilege seekers can secure, under a court-made rule, a clean bill of health without running risks in a law court.

RADIO TRUST IMMUNE FROM MONOPOLY LAW?

Washington, Dec. 28.—Is the radio trust immune from the Federal anti-monopoly law?

The radio act, passed by Congress, provides that the Federal Radio Commission shall refuse a broadcasting license to any company found guilty of unfair competition or violating the anti-trust law.

The Radio Corporation of America, known as the radio trust, was found guilty by Federal Judge Hugh M. Morris, at Wilmington, on November 19 last, of monopoly practices, and was ordered to desist. The practices complained of was compelling independent manufacturers to use radio trust tubes.

Judge Morris made permanent his temporary order of two years ago. During these two years the radio trust has been defeated in the Circuit Court of Appeals and in the United States Supreme Court.

Despite this violation of law, the Federal Radio Commission does not act. The same is true of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice.

It is significant that the Navy Department is in possession of a patent which is the heart of the trust's monopoly and, it is claimed, antedates the trust's patent. The Navy Department has been urged to carry its case to the courts, but no action has been taken.

Both the trust and the commission are agreed that labor should be denied a clear channel of broadcasting, although this right is enjoyed by newspapers, public utilities and other profit-seeking institutions.

BRITISH LABOR WINS CLOSE COAL CONTEST

London, England, Dec. 28.—The British Labor party passed the coal mines bill by a narrow margin of eight votes. The vote was 281 to 273.

The bill will enable coal owners to combine to regulate output and fix minimum prices.

The opposition did not take advantage of its power to overthrow the government by uniting. The Laborites claim the Tories and Liberals feared to defeat the bill, as this would force a general election and Labor would be returned to power with a clear majority.

Premier MacDonald answered Winston Churchill's attack on the bill. The Labor party leader accuse the Tory chieftain of indulging in "wit and polished phrases" and refusing to offer anything constructive.

HAZARDOUS LABOR OF WOMEN GUARDED

Washington, Dec. 28.—Practically all nations have legislation protecting wage working women against the effects of lead, phosphorus, mercury and arsenic poisoning, according to a statement issued by the United States Women's Bureau.

In the United States the amount of this prohibitory legislation is small, 29 States and the District of Columbia having no laws regarding the employment of women in any specific occupation.

The bureau indorses the prohibition of women from occupations unquestionably and peculiarly detrimental to their health.

MOONEY PARDON PLEA BEFORE STATE BOARD

San Francisco, Dec. 28.—The Mooney pardon plea is being considered by the State Pardon Board, where it was shifted by Governor Young after several months' consideration. When he left for his vacation early last summer he took the papers with him and indicated that he would act after a thorough study of the case, which is now turned over to the pardon board, and none will study it more carefully.

The board consists of the lieutenant governor, who is known to be friendly to the pardon; two wardens who are appointees of the governor; James Johnston, director of the State Department of Penology, who also seems inclined to pardon, and Attorney General Webb. The position of the latter is unknown.

The governor claims that Mooney should be released until Billings is released. The latter's case must be passed upon by the State Supreme Court and Billings has limited that he prepare his petition. He has read law all these years and recently completed the work. The plea is now before the Supreme Court and it is impossible to say when that body will act.

Governor Young's changed attitude surprised friends of a Mooney pardon, although the innocence of Mooney is not denied.

WANT FEDERAL AID TO CHECK PRICE WAR

New York, Dec. 28.—Retail tobacco dealers appeal to President Hoover to check the cigarette price war.

The dealers' "union" has the awe-inspiring title, "Joint National Committee of Tobacco Retailers and Jobbers for Living Margin of Profit." They ask the President to assemble the leading cigarette manufacturers in solemn conclave, that cut-throat competition may be checked.

The proposal is along the lines of an accepted "anti-Sherman" policy—that does not apply to labor, however. Wages are yet supposed to be governed by "the law of supply and demand."

In Memoriam, 1929

James Arkison, former chairman legislative committee Letter Carriers.

Victor B. Andrew, editor Houston Labor Journal.

George B. Benham, former secretary California Federation of Labor.

Frank Buckland, vice president Operating Engineers.

Joseph Binder, former organizer Pattern Makers.

James Bruck, editor Chicago Federation News.

John J. Casey, Congressman and president Pennsylvania Federation of Labor.

William A. Cole, representative Carpenters.

Homer Call, former secretary-treasurer Butcher Workmen.

John C. Dermell, former auditor Cigarmakers.

Joshua B. Dale, A. F. of L. organizer.

Henry M. Donnelly, secretary Rhode Island Federation of Labor.

Charles Eno, vice president Minnesota Federation of Labor.

Michael F. Glenn, vice president Boilermakers.

James Hays, vice president Operative Plasterers.

Andrew Hughes, former president Coopers.

Martin P. Higgins, former president Printing Pressmen.

Frank Hoffman, vice president Restaurant Employes.

Frank T. Hawley, former president Switchmen.

Daniel J. Keefe, former president Longshoremen.

William E. Kelly, former president Letter Carriers.

Victor Kleiber, secretary-treasurer Molders.

Leroy Kennedy, former president Arizona Federation of Labor.

Thomas E. Lee, representative Electrical Workers.

William G. Lee, former president Trainmen.

Zotique Lesperance, general executive board Boot and Shoe Workers.

Edward J. McGivern, president Operative Plasterers.

John D. Murphy, vice president Post Office Clerks.

M. J. Murphy, vice president Steam Engineers.

Joseph Meyung, auditor Barbers.

Lewis H. Moore, first secretary Arkansas Federation of Labor.

James P. Noonan, president Electrical Workers.

Otto Nichols, organizer United Garment Workers.

Thomas P. O'Rourke, vice president Plumbers.

Henry Ott, former president Ohio Federation of Labor.

Richard (Dick) Powers, one of 11 trade unionists who signed call at Terre Haute, Ind., August 2, 1881, for meeting in Pittsburgh, November 11, 1881, that resulted in formation of A. F. of L.

Matthew H. Parker, vice president Paper Makers.

Richard Pattison, former president Sheet Metal Workers.

John F. Rader, corresponding and financial secretary Brewery Workers.

David B. Robb, president District No. 11, Mine Workers.

Charles F. Reichers, "father of German Workers" and first general secretary of that organization.

C. L. Shamp, secretary-treasurer Stationary Firemen.

James H. Sheehy, organizer Plumbers.

Grant Stewart, former recording secretary Actors' Equity.

Caroline P. Shel, former president Teamsters.

Joseph Sullivan, vice president Plumbers.

Walter N. Thayer, former president New York Federation of Labor.

Maurice R. Welch, secretary and treasurer Switchmen.

Ollie S. Wilson, former secretary-treasurer Oklahoma Federation of Labor.

ADAMSON, CLAYTON PASSED AWAY IN 1929

Washington, Dec. 28.—Former Congressmen Adamson and Clayton, both well-known to trade unionists, died during the year 1929.

The former introduced the Adamson eight-hour law for railroad transportation employes, following President Wilson's special message to Congress, August 29, 1916. The four brotherhoods had taken a strike vote and Congress met all records in the passage of this labor legislation. The President's message was read August 29, the House passed the Adamson bill September 1, the Senate took similar action the following day, and the bill was signed September 5, the intervening days being Sunday and Labor Day.

Congressman Clayton, as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, reported amendments to the Sherman anti-trust law that were urged by organized labor. These amendments include the declaration that "the labor power of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce." He resigned as a member of Congress shortly after to assume the duties of District Federal Judge. His decisions were noted for their humanity.

1929 PROFITS UP

New York, Dec. 28.—Net profits for 1929 of all corporations in this country are $15,000,000,000, or an increase of 40 per cent over the previous year, according to the McGraw-Hill Publications.

NON-UNION MINE PLANT EXPLODES; 60 KILLED

Indianapolis, Dec. 28.—The Old Town Company mine, that exploded at McAlester, Okla., and killed 60 workers, is nonunion, said Ellis Searles, editor Mine Workers' Journal, in discussing this latest mine horror.

"Workers in this mine are mostly Mexican and negroes, who are induced to work under conditions fixed by the company and in which they are denied voice," said Mr. Searles.

"This explosion contains the record that a vast majority of miners' deaths occur in non-union mines. In a list of these explosions, from April 27, 1917, to May, 1928, issued by the United States Bureau of Mines, our records show that of the 1,496 deaths, 320 were in organized mines and 1,176 were in unorganized mines."

WHITE FLAG HOISTED BY FASCIST LEAGUE

New York, Dec. 28.—The Fascist League of North America has replaced their black flag by the white flag.

This spy adjunct of Mussolini, smarting under increased publicity, and fearing an investigation by the United States Senate, voted to dissolve at a meeting in this city.

The league's records will be forwarded to Rome, it is stated, but one newspaper makes the significant announcement: "All that might possibly remain is a dummy organization to protect the league's name from exploiting interlopers."

Organized labor has protested against methods of this brazen group who publicly pleaded the cause of autocracy, and urged Italians in this country not to become citizens but to remain loyal to Mussolini and the theory that "the State can do no wrong."

GILBERT ROE DEAD

New York, Dec. 28.—Gilbert E. Roe, prominent attorney and former partner of the late Senator Robert M. LaFollette, died at his home in this city after a two-months' illness.

Gilbert Roe, during the past 30 years, figured in many battles for freedom. He was as hard a fighter for free speech, thought and action as was "Fighting Bob," his companion and friend.

GASOLINE FROM COAL

Washington, Dec. 28.—Coal must ultimately be the primary source of gasoline and other liquid motor fuels, according to A. C. Fieldner, chief chemist United States Bureau of Mines.

A German process whereby coal is turned into an oil and then refined is one of the most practical for making coal into gasoline, Mr. Fieldner said.

DEPUTIES ACQUITTED; KILLED SIX STRIKERS

Burnsville, N. C., Dec. 28.—Eight deputies charged with killing six textile strikers at Marion, October 2, were acquitted. The trial lasted 11 days and the jury deliberated 22 hours.

State Solicitor Pless, who prosecuted the mill deputies, was less successful than when he secured the conviction, a few weeks ago, of Alfred Hoffman, organizer United Textile Workers, and three associates on charges of rioting. Pless attempted to build up a case of "sedition, treason and rebellion" on the same evidence.

The mill deputies claimed they shot in self-defense. They threw gas bombs at the crowd of 200 strikers and shot, they claimed, only after the strikers opened fire. The defense named strikers who shot, but all these were killed.

The workers claimed the victims were shot in the back and that none of them used a pistol.

The defense counsel is jubilant over this triumph of "law and order." Workers silently point to the conviction of strikers, the killing of workers and the escape of murderous mill deputies.

Citizens who oppose organize labor agree with Solicitor Pless' verdict quickly," but they approve the acquittal.

A report of the deputies' trial will be made at the conference of trade unionists called by President Green at Charlotte, this State.

CHAIN RESTAURANT HAS STOCK SCHEME

New York, Dec. 28.—The Childs Company, chain restaurant operator, is the latest to offer employes an opportunity to become "capitalists."

The plan dispels any illusion that employes will eventually "own the business."

A limit of 10 shares is placed on each employe whose wage is $1,500 a year or less. Managers and superintendents who are paid $6,000 or more may buy 100 shares, but total sales can not exceed 75,000 shares out of outstanding 200,221 shares of common stock. If employes and managers bought to the limit and then placed all their stock in the hands of a representative to attend the company's board of directors' meeting, they would have but one-fifth of the voting strength.

The price of the stock is $56, to be paid for at the rate of $1.50 a month a share. The stock pays a dividend of $2.40 a year, but like all common stock, this depends on business and upon the judgment of the board of directors, who can pass dividends any time they elect.

New Industries Fail To Absorb Workers Displaced by Machine

Louisville, Ky., Dec. 28.—"Workers are being displaced faster than they can be absorbed by other branches of industry," says John Walker Rogers, deputy labor inspector of this State, in his study, "The Elder Worker, Displaced Employment, Security, Relief."

Mr. Rogers says the displacement of workers at 40 years of age by younger men "is a problem that tends to become daily more acute, more extensive and more difficult to solve," and that this practice "will become a general policy in the industrial world."

"All the modern trends in industry seem to be working against older employes," says Mr. Rogers. "The increasing standards of efficiency necessitated by fiercer competition; specialized industry; the elimination or at least reduced demand for skill and experience because of the use of mechanized production methods and automatic machinery; consolidations of large enterprises with the consequent reduction of personnel and many other aspects of modern industry" are listed as factors that operate against employment of 40 and 45-year workers.

"While the percentage of employers who arbitrarily dismiss skilled workers at the age of 40 or slightly more than that is comparatively small, it is, nevertheless, certain that great numbers of men are thrown out of employment for that reason. These men are finding themselves hard pressed to keep up the standard of their appearance shows their age as being that of the middle portion of life.

On the question of old-age pensions, Mr. Rogers says:

"The old threadbare argument that it is the employe's duty to provide for his own need is unsound. Wages paid to workers of the class who come to need help are not sufficient for them to save enough for the time in their latter life when they are no longer able to engage actively in industry."

Equity Courts Use Kingly Power Given Them By State Lawmakers

St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 28.—When the legislature gives extraordinary power to equity courts, and government by injunction results, the courts have the right to exercise such power.

This is the substance of a decision by the State Supreme Court in upholding Minnesota's newspaper suppression act, commonly known as the "gag" law.

The law, enacted by the 1925 legislature, gives a district judge sitting as a court of equity, the power to suppress any publication printing "malicious, scandalous and defamatory matter."

The law was applied to a weekly newspaper that attacked politicians, and an equity court padlocked the offending publication.

The politicians could resort to the libel laws of the State, but this would take time with the added danger of the charges being proven. The method is replaced by the "efficient" system of equity, whereby the court issues an order at the request of plaintiff—as employers do in labor disputes—and then punishes the defendant for contempt of court.

In upholding the "gag" law, the Supreme Court said that "presumably an evil criminal to the public welfare, existed in this State which the legislature intended to remedy."

The court gave no indication that the judiciary will surrender any power placed in its hands by the legislature, and held that the law violates neither the State nor the Federal Constitution.

As matters now stand, government by conscience has replaced government by law, and each district judge will enforce the law according to what he considers "malicious, scandalous and defamatory."

Newspapers throughout the country make vigorous protest against this court rule. Many of these editors have insisted that when labor objects to government by injunction, the workers seek means to violate law. The editors ignore the principle involved, and only object to one-man government where they may be directly affected.

WOMEN CHAIN CLERKS PAID PAUPER WAGE

Washington, Dec. 28.—Wages for women employes in chain department stores range between $12 and $15 a week, according to a survey by the United States Women's Bureau. Nearly one-half are paid less than $12. In six States the rate is as low as $9.

The study included 6,000 women employed in 18 States. Seventy per cent of the total receive less than $15 a week and over 40 per cent less. California pays as high as $16.

Middlemen Fear Co-Op. Plan Commerce Group Aid Dealers

Washington, Dec. 28.—Senate committee hearings reveal a struggle between the Federal Farm Board and grain dealers who are fighting for their existence. The dealers are led by Julius H. Barnes, chairman board of directors United States Chamber of Commerce, and Duluth grain dealer, interested in farmers become strong enough to market their commodities without the aid of middlemen.

The grain dealers were aware of this when the law was being considered, but evidently planned to defeat it by hostile interpretations after it passed, rather than openly oppose it on the floor of Congress. The middlemen are hopeful that the Federal Farm Board will "play no favorites," as they say Secretary Butterworth of the United States Chamber of Commerce is also concerned about the possibilities of unity among farmers. He advises that "the program of co-operative marketing be undertaken slowly and with caution."

MANY UNION CHIEFS DIED DURING 1929

Washington, Dec. 29.—An unusual number of trade union executives and former executives died during the year 1929. The list includes:

Daniel J. Keefe, former president International Longshoremen's Union, and former A. F. of L. vice president, Chicago, January 3.

Cornelius P. Shea, former president Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chicago, January 12.

Richard Pattison, former president International Brotherhood Sheet Metal Workers' Union, New York City, January 15.

Frank T. Hawley, former president Switchmen's Union of North America, Indianapolis, February 21.

Edward J. McGivern, president Operative Plasterers' International Association, Washington, April 6.

Andrew Furuseth, former president Coopers' International Union, May 23.

Martin P. Higgins, former president International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, Ossipee, N. Y., July 10.

William E. Kelly, former president National Association of Letter Carriers, Brooklyn, N. Y., September 20.

William L. Hutcheson, president Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, November 2.

James P. Noonan, president Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and A. F. of L. vice president, Washington, December 3.

BAKERS ORGANIZE

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Dec. 28.—Bakers in this city organized and are chartered by the Bakery and Confectionery Workers' Union.

AMERICAN WORKER'S OUTPUT LEADS PRODUCTION COST LOWEST IN WORLD

New York, Dec. 28.—The American worker does three to seven times as much work as the European, according to Dr. Thomas Thornton Read, professor of mining at Columbia University, in making public the result of a study of the relative amount of work done in the 15 leading countries in the world. He says American wages are low, when compared with the cost of work done.

He refutes the European claim that unlimited natural resources and an industrial system with magic power is responsible for America's prosperity. This country's workers, he says, can be profitably employed at a daily wage about equal to the weekly wage of Europeans because the American does more work than the European.

By means of charts, Dr. Read shows that the total of the times representing the work done in 14 foreign countries, hardly equal the work done in the United States.

Dr. Read also gauged the comparative amount of work done per person in the various countries. He obtained the following ratios, again showing this country far in the lead: Russia, 2½; Italy, 2¾; Japan, 3½; Poland, 6; Holland, 7; Finland, 8½; Australia, 8½; Czechoslovakia, 9½; Germany, 12; Belgium, 16; Great Britain, 18; Canada, 20, and the United States, 50.

"Every person in the United States," Dr. Read asserted, "has 35 invisible slaves working for him, and the most significant thing is that these slaves do not consume anything, so that all the product is available for the 'boss.' The American workman is not a wage slave, but a boss of a considerable force, whether he realizes it or not.

"The result is that, although the average wage is high, the average cost of work in this country is low."

RAIL VALUATION WILL BE REVISED

Washington, Dec. 28.—The Interstate Commerce Commission has reopened, for further argument, the celebrated "recapture" case of the St. Louis & O'Fallon railroad, a short line in East St. Louis.

The case revolves around the "recapture" clause of the transportation act which provides that one-half of all railroad net profits shall be turned over to the government. The St. Louis & O'Fallon railroad held that the Interstate Commerce Commission placed a low value on its property and this permitted a high net profit. The United States Supreme Court loaned toward the railroad.

The money involved amounts to a few thousand dollars, but other railroads are virtually affected.

The commission will now hold hearings on the O'Fallon case based on the court's ruling. It is estimated that other railroads would be forced to surrender $50,000,000 if the commission were upheld.

Two schools on the theory of valuation have developed. One holds that valuation should be based on actual investment, while the railroads hold that present reproduction costs should be considered. If the latter theory is accepted, rates will undoubtedly be increased, as the interest on money that was never expended.

Senator Howell has introduced a bill which would legalize the commission's system of valuation, and the railroads are lined up to save their $300,000,000.

FARM OUTPUT COSTS CUT BY MACHINERY

Washington, Dec. 28.—Increased use of farm machinery is reducing production costs with less man power, according to the U. S. Department of Agricultural engineering division, Department of Agriculture.

"Now, the average agricultural worker could care for but 12 acres of crops, 75 years ago," said Mr. McCreery. "Now, farming units are larger, and the average is more than 100 acres, while on many individual farms it will run as high as 500 acres or more."

Less farm labor, the engineer pointed out, also means less work for the farmer's wife, who does not have such a large crew for which to cook.

INJUNCTION RELIEF URGED BY UNIONISTS

Albany, N. Y., Dec. 28.—Injunction relief features organized labor's 1930 legislative program that will be submitted to the State Legislature.

The bill provides that no injunction shall be issued until after a hearing in court with both parties present and that any person accused of violating such court order shall be entitled to jury trial as a right.

Old-age pensions and a workmen's compensation system operated by the state are also major proposals.